IOR/L/PS/12/2178

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MICROFILMED DOCUMENT: IOR NEG ----

BLQFP PROGRAMME 2016, Phase 2

Previous File: Y139/19

Next File:

No. 7

File 9

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL) DEPARTMENT.

COLLECTION.

GENERAL HEADING { Arms Questions.

IOR: L/P&S/12/2178

SUB-HEAD - - { Export of Arms to China

Notes: 7/10 Supply of arms to China via Burma.

This File contains the following papers:—

YEAR.										
1932	P.Z.	435	601	865	1212	2302	4842	4954	7422	7646	7947:
19	P.										
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19	P.										
19	P.										
19	P.										

☞ Papers may be removed from or placed within this File only by the Political Registry.

4987B 1000 12.30

With the Compliments of the Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

FILE COPY.

EXT 3047 46 46 INDEXED

(This is an unparaphrased version of a Secret cypher message and unless it is marked O.T.P. (One Time Pad) the text must first be paraphrased if it is essential to communicate it to persons outside British and United States Government Services.)

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

WF. 261/64
CYPHER (TYPEX)

FROM : D.O. R.D.

TO : CANADA (GOVT.)
AUSTRALIA ,,
NEW ZEALAND ,,
SOUTH AFRICA ,,

(Sent 4.45 p.m. 23rd Nov., 1946.)

D. No. 1073 TOP SECRET

United Kingdom Government have recently received a number of requests from Chinese Government for supplies of arms and military equipment.

2. Early in June, this year we acceded to one such request for ammunition. Subsequently United Kingdom Ambassador in Nanking received further requests. As internal situation in China had deteriorated considerably since date of original request and because large scale fighting had been proceeding between Kuomintang and Chinese Communists it was felt that no more shipments should be made. Matter was discussed in Paris with Mr. Byrnes and it was confirmed in August that United States Government had decided not to permit exports of further supplies of arms and ammunition to China.

3. United Kingdom Ambassador in Nanking was therefore instructed to inform Chinese Government that we had carefully considered their requests but felt unable to comply with them.

4. According to Sir Ralph Stevenson, the Chinese authorities have approached other quarters including the Swiss Government who have also rejected the application. It appears possible that the Chinese Government may also approach the Government of India for surplus war material.

5. United Kingdom Government have also received a request from the Inspector General of Chinese Customs for a supply of arms for preventive work. This is still under consideration.

Copy to:-

F.O. (China Dept.)	Mr. A. Scott
"	Mr. J.W. Hamilton
I.O.	Mr. E.P. Donaldson

SPECIAL

REC'D EXT. DEPT. INDIA OFFICE 25 NOV 1946

FILE COPY
EXT.

F.O. (Ellis only)
Mar Sept 46

INWARD TELEGRAM

INDEXED
7646
7422
28607
11 NOV 1946
per VK 11/11

Allotted to External Dept.
Copies circulated.

(4)

CYPHER TELEGRAM (O.T.P.).

From Government of India,
External Affairs Dept.

To Secretary of State for
India.

Dated New Delhi, 19.10 hours,
8th November 1946.

Received 18.00 hours, 8th
November 1946.

9582

7422 Your telegram 19,347
November 1st.

2. Chinese Government have made no repeat no such approach so far.

REC'D EXT. DEPT.
X 1 NOV 1946
INDIA OFFICE

(5)

7/9 Mark. Send telegram

pa D 4/11 TOP SECRET

Mr. Donaldson U.S.S. Sir D. Scott-Fox

CHINESE REQUEST FOR SUPPLY OF ARMS AND RAW MATERIAL

1. There are no previous papers.

2. I think it important that the Government of India should have this advance information of HMG's policy should the approach be made. A draft telegram is attached for approval: I have left it to the Government of India to decide how much to tell their Charge d'Affaires in Nanking.

3. A draft reply to Kitson is also attached.

Sir W. Croft
Mr Donaldson

J.K. 31/10

Unless F.O. see any objection - I can't see why they should - I think it and it as well to add as a [illegible] It is what we told them from a Dominion

Draft for approval. After consultation with F.O. it was thought best to omit giving any lead one way or the other on to informing the Indian representative at Nanking.

31.X

My first inclination was that this ought to end with a request to be consulted if an approach is made to India. But I fancy it is better to leave that to be inferred WSC 31/10.

DEPTL. No. Ext 9422/46

DRAFT TELEGRAM

~~CODE~~
CYPHER O.T.P.

From Secretary of State for ~~Foreign Affairs~~, India ~~Office~~.

To Government of India, External Affairs Dept.

Repeated to United States

SEND 1/11

DESPATCHED 1/11/ 1946 1355

2 NOV 1946

COPY TO War Staff, Mr Kitson FO (with covering letter) (with covering letter 4/11/46)

Copies circulated

Copy for Mr Kitson attached 4/11

15

TOP SECRET

Important

No. 1934

E. It is possible that the Chinese Government may make a direct approach to the Government of India concerning the possibility of obtaining surplus war material from India. ~~In the past 2 months~~ They have recently made two secret approaches to H.M.G.

2. This matter was discussed in Paris with U.S. Secretary of State, and it has been confirmed that the U.S. Government had decided not to permit the export of any further supplies of arms and ammunition to China some weeks previously. This being so it is clearly out of the question that HMG should do so unilaterally.

3. HM Ambassador in Nanking was accordingly instructed to inform the Chinese Government that their request had been carefully considered by HMG, but ~~they~~ that latter regretted that they were not in a position to comply.

~~4. This advance information is sent in case an approach is made to your Charge d'Affaires in Nanking. You will no doubt consider the possibility of keeping the latter informed.~~

~~4. Above information is~~

4. H.M.G. wd. be glad to be informed if any such approach as is mentioned in para 1 is made to G.O.I.

EXT 7422/46

(7)

TOP SECRET

DRAFT LETTER

G.V. Kitson, Esq., C.B.E.
Foreign Office.

4 NOV 1946

My dear Kitson

Thank you for your letter No.F.15299/119/G of 29th October, 1946. We have passed on this information to the Government of India in an abbreviated form, and I attach a copy of our telegram. We have not given a lead one way or the other in regard to ~~left it to~~ the Government of India ~~to decide how much they should tell~~ their Chargé d'Affaires in Nanking letting know of the Chinese Govt's approach.

4 NOV 1946

Yours ever,

(Sgd) E. P. DONALDSON

FILE COPY.

(1) Register at any M & R. (2) (8)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S. W. 1.

29th October, 1946.

EXT 7422 46

(F 15299/119/G)
SECRET

INDEXED

(I wonder whether we ought not to ensure that this Indian reference in Nanking is put wise as well)

My dear Donaldson,

I enclose copy of correspondence with our Embassy at Nanking about two requests for the supply of arms and war material to the Chinese Government.

4

As you will see, we have turned down the request made by General Kwei, and we propose, after consulting War Office, to do likewise in the case of that made by General Yu.

You will see that General Yu asked our Military Attaché at Nanking about the possibility of obtaining surplus war material from India (Nanking telegram No. 647, paragraph 3). In view of the possibility of the Chinese Government making a direct approach to Government of India, I suggest that, if you see no objection, the story might be telegraphed to the Government of India for their secret information, so that they may be warned in advance of any such approach.

below.

REC'D FXT. DEPT. 30 OCT 1946 INDIA OFFICE

Yours sincerely,

G. V. Kitson

(G. V. Kitson)

E. P. Donaldson, Esq., C.M.G.,
India Office.

EXT 7422

SECRET (9)

F13859/119/9

Cypher/OTP DEPARTMENTAL NO.1.

FROM NANKING TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir R. Stevenson.
No. 528 D. 12.35 p.m. 18th September, 1946.

17th September, 1946. R. 2.35 p.m. 18th September, 1946.

Repeated to Washington,
Moscow.

a a a a

SECRET

GUARD

General Kwei Yung-Ching formerly Head of Chinese Military Mission in Berlin has approached General Sir A. Carton de Wiart on the instructions of Chiang Kai-shek with a request for the assistance of His Majesty's Government in obtaining certain war material. General Carton de Wiart brought him to see me this morning.

2. General Kwei after expatiating on the political situation of the World and the inevitability of an eventual clash between the Soviet Union and the democratic powers, emphasised the vital necessity of attaining Chinese unity and consequently of the Central Government defeating the Communist troops in China in the shortest possible space of time. He confirmed that in these circumstances Chiang Kai-shek had charged him personally to approach us in the greatest secrecy and ask for our help.

3. The position was he said, that with economy, the Central Governments forces had enough munitions to last them for a year and a half. But if they required to make an all-out effort, such as now was necessary, they must acquire further stocks. They had approached the United States authorities for supplies of ammunition for 150,000 American rifles in use in Chinese army but had met with continual delays and postponements on various pretexts. In answer to a question put to him at this juncture he affirmed that the Central Government had evidence of direct supply to the Communists by the Soviet Union of Russian and German war material.

4. At this point General Kwei made a digression on the theme of the superior knowledge and juster appreciation of the world situation on the part of Great Britain as compared with the United States of America and the greater ability of the former to maintain the necessary secrecy in important and delicate matters.

5.

5. He went on to ask whether it would be possible for His Majesty's Government to supply munitions from ex-German stocks in British zone of occupation in Germany. The main need was small arm ammunition (7.9) of which they required at least 6,000, million rounds. They would also like certain quantities of rifles and machine guns particularly if they were forced through lack of ammunition to store their United States rifles. In such a case they would require more 7.9 ammunition than the quantity mentioned above. He explained that it would serve no useful purpose to be more explicit about the exact needs of the Chinese Government until they know whether His Majesty's Government were in a position to [gp. omitted] them as suggested when all necessary information would of course be forthcoming.

6. I undertook to pass Chiang Kai-shek's request on to you and to emphasise its secrecy. I told General Kwei that he naturally could not expect me to comment on it as it obviously raised wide political issues which could only be weighed up in London.

7. From a local point of view this approach is interesting on two counts. It shows

(a) That the Central Government have completely abandoned any idea of reaching a compromise with the Communists and are only paying lip service to American efforts to halt civil war; and

(b) That the United States authorities are in fact cutting down supplies of war material in an attempt to ensure that the Central Government will be more amenable.

Foreign Office please pass to Washington, Moscow as my telegrams Nos. 48 and 43 respectively.

[Repeated to Washington and Moscow under Foreign Office numbers 9125 and 3096 respectively].

SECRET

(10)

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

EXT 7422 46

F13859/119/9.

F.13859/G.
Secret.
Cypher/OTP.

DEPARTMENTAL NO.1.

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO NANKING

No.910.
16th October, 1946.

D. 11.30 a.m. 16th October, 1946.

DEDIP.

- - - - -

TOP SECRET.

attached

Your telegram No.528 [of 17th September: War material for the Chinese Government]

Matter was discussed in Paris with United States Secretary of State who expressed gratitude, explaining that the United States Government were in very great difficulties in China. They felt that Chinese Government had been exploiting them and had not acted straight over negotiations with the Communists. General Marshall had therefore been authorised to return whenever he felt he ought. United States Government were at present considering withdrawing all Marines from North China and indeed would probably have done so already but for Russian press attacks. Byrnes seemed very perturbed about the whole position.

2. Washington despatch No.2402 of 9th October, copied to you direct, confirms that about six weeks previously the United States Government decided not to permit the export of any further supplies of arms and munitions to China. This being so it is clearly out of the question that we should do so unilaterally, and we would wish in fact to keep completely clear of the whole business.

3. In the circumstances, you should inform General Kwei that his request has been carefully considered by His Majesty's Government but that they regret they are not in a position to comply.

E.A.T.
7422
46

SECRET

F 15299/119/9.

Cypher/OTP DEPARTMENTAL NO.1

FROM NANKING TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Sir R. Stevenson.
No.647 D. 4.05 p.m. 18th October, 1946

18th October, 1946. R. 1.00 a.m. 19th October, 1946

DEDIP

TOP SECRET

att.

Your telegram No.910 (not repeated to Washington and Moscow).

[?gps. omitted ? Military Attaché was] asked to call on General Yu Ta Wei on October 16th. I presume General Yu is now Minister of Communications but continues to handle high level ordinance policy and is Government nominee on General Marshal's Three-Man Committee for negotiation of military settlement with the Communists.

2. The object was to enquire about the availability of 7.92 m.m. ammunition from British sources and it became clear that General Yu is informed of General Kwei's earlier approach. General Yu stressed the Government's duty to provide a satisfactory standard of internal security and, by implication, obligation upon friendly Governments to assist. Dealing with the obvious "political" difficulties of His Majesty's Government in supplying war material in the present circumstances the General endeavoured to suggest that specific demands for small quantities "for security [gp. undec. ?reasons]" might be considered without prejudice to international issues. He insisted that the Government's policy was not (repeat not) to destroy Communist forces but to ensure the maintenance of their own forces in sufficient strength to neutralise any threat to internal security due to Communist intransigeance.

3. Having found the Military Attaché cautious in his replies, General Yu enquired whether there was any liklihood of surplus material being made available from India by the new Government there. It is clear that a direct approach to New Delhi is not now excluded, your telegram under reference reaching me after the above conversation and action upon it may increase the probability of such a direct approach. Meanwhile Communist propaganda is accusing the Government of trying to obtain American war material "under the counter" from South

American

American sources: and it is clear that, faced with the known existence of considerable stocks of Japanese arms in Communist hands, with their own difficulties in obtaining deliveries and with the fear that Communist stocks may be replenished from Soviet sources, the Government will explore every channel to increase their own reserves to avoid the unpleasant possibility that Communist supply position will become better than their own.

4. I shall speak to General Kwei as instructed in your telegram under reference but the Military Attaché is not (repeat not) reporting his conversation direct to the War Office and will require instructions about his reply to General Yu particularly on the point whether small quantities cannot be made available without "political" implications. I presume that in view of the wording of paragraph 2 of your telegram under reference that Military Attaché's reply should be negative, but would be grateful for confirmation. Record of talk with General Yu follows by bag.

SECRET

(12)

EXT
7422

F15379/119/9.

Cypher/OTP

DEPARTMENTAL NO.1.

FROM NANKING TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Sir R. Stevenson
No. 660
21st October, 1946

D. 10.35 a.m. 22nd October, 1946
R. 1.25 p.m. 22nd October, 1946

eeeeeee

TOP SECRET

att.

Your telegram No.910.

Following from Wallinger.

General Kwei has been away and His Majesty's Ambassador was unable to see him before he left this morning for Peking. I have now given the General your message which he accepted philosophically and indeed seemed to expect. He added in any case the situation had changed since his approach to General Carton de Wiart and government was now confident that if the Communists would not come to negotiate agreement, two to three months would see the end of their danger as military force.

2. I ventured to wonder whether the General was not over optimistic: what about guerilla warfare on an important scale? The General replied guerillas needed peasant support and the Government had found the people in reoccupied areas disillusioned and longing for peace at any price.

3. General Kwei also said that he had reason to believe that the present American attitude of refusing military supplies would soon be reversed.

4. I pass the above on for what it may be worth as, surprising as it seems to us here, General Kwei does have access to the highest quarters. It would appear from my telegram No.647 that General Yu Ta Wei does not share General Kwei's optimism.

(13)

Sec. Mil. Dept.

For information (Pl. see also P.Z. 2302/32 below)

H.F. Crombie

18/8/32

Seen thanks

19.8.32.

M
5245
1932

Putley

H.C. 20/8

D.O. 3.

INDEXED

Communications on this subject should be addressed to—
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,
DOMINIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1,
and the following number quoted:—
6360

F 4954 1932

I.O (4) Indian Mr. C

Subject: Export of Arms to China

If again please see 17/8

CONFIDENTIAL

pp 4842 Mr C 13/8

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter from the Dominions Office of the 10.8.32 4842

6360/20

See Foreign 10716/11/8/32

Transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

A copy has also been sent to the I.O B.T Admlty a/m DOT W/O

ENCLOSURE IN W[illegible] LETTER
NO. 233 18 AUG. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

Dominions Office, Downing Street,
12. 8 1932.

(R9279) Wt 11286/2705 20,000(4) 10/31 H & Sp Gp 112

(15)

I.O.

P.M.
4954
1932

6360.

TELEGRAM from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia.

(Sent 2.30 p.m. 11th August 1932).

No.76. Secret.

Your telegram 9th August No.118 Secret. Position so far as this country is concerned is that in view of the armistice between China and Japan signed at Shanghai on the 5th May it was decided that the special embargo on the sale of Government owned arms to China and Japan which was in force while hostilities continued need not be maintained and the embargo has now been removed.

X.

D.O. 3.

INDEXED

Communications on this subject should be addressed to—
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,
DOMINIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1,
and the following number quoted:—
6360/20

4842
1930

Subject:

Export of arms Kash to China

1/0

(16)

pp. 2302 17/8/32

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter from to the Dominions Office of the 13/4/32
6360/18

2302
Gee 7/9

Tel from Chancellor 9/8/32 No 116 –

Transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

10 AUG 1932

A copy has also been sent to the F/O - B/T.
W/O . Admy.
A/M . D.O.T.

Dominions Office, Downing Street,
19

10 AUG 1932

ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LETTER
No. 233 18 AUG. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

(R9279) Wt 11286/2705 20,000(4) 10/31 H & Sp Gp 112

P. Z.
4842
1932

(17)

Telegram from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

Dated 9th August Received 11.5.a.m. 9th August 1932

No. 116 Secret. Your telegram of 12th April No. 27 Secret.

Should be glad to learn views of H.M.Government in the United Kingdom on the question of sale of arms and Ammunition to China by H.M.Government in the Commonwealth of Australia under the conditions now existing.

D.O. 3. INDEXED

P.Z. 2302 1932

Communications on this subject should be addressed to—
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,
DOMINIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1,
and the following number quoted:—
6360/18

3

Subject: Export of Arms to China

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter from the Dominions Office of the 8/2/32 - 6360/16

1. Ltr from Chancellor No 42 of 12/4/32
2/ Ltr to Chancellor No 27 of 12/4/32

Transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

A copy has also been sent to the F.O. B/Trade. W.O. Admiralty Admin + Do Trade

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

13 APR 1932 19

ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LETTER
No. Z16. 21 APR 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

(R9279) Wt 11286/2705 20,000(4) 10/31 H & Sp Gp 112

P.Z.
2302
1932

(A)

Telegram from Prime Minister Commonwealth of Australia to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs

Dated 12th April Received 10.3.a.m. 12th April 1932.

No. 42. Secret. Enquiry has been received from China for obsolete or surplus military equipment such as guns and ammunition etc. H.M.Government in the Commonwealth of Australia have surplus stocks of .303 rifles and obsolete cadet rifles which are of no further military use. Consideration has been given on several occasions to dumping them. Commonwealth Government have also large quantity of obsolete Mark VI ammunition which will have to be dumped next year as well as quantity of Mark VII which is over age and rapidly deteriorating. It would be most advantageous to H.M.Government in the Commonwealth of Australia to get rid of this surplus or obsolete equipment but before reaching decision would be glad to have views of H.M.Government in the United Kingdom. It is understood that British Manufacturers are selling large quantities of military equipment to China and it is presumed that there are no objections to Commonwealth Government doing the same reply urgently would be appreciated.

(20)

P.Z.
2302
1932

6360/18.

TELEGRAM from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia.

(Sent 9.0 p.m., 12th April, 1932.)

Important.

No.27. Secret.

Your telegram 12th April No.42 Secret. Position in this country is that export of arms to China is subject to licence by the Board of Trade which is only granted if corresponding import licence has been issued by Chinese Government (see my telegram Circular B No.122 of 8th August 1930). It has not been found practicable to impose any further restriction and the present dispute between China and Japan, in the view of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, increases rather than diminishes the difficulty of doing so, since strict impartiality between the two disputants would necessitate the application of any embargo to both countries. Owing to the greater ease with which Japan can manufacture arms, such application might arouse complaints from China that it in fact operated in favour of Japan. Moreover past experience has shown the extreme difficulty of imposing any effective check on the flow of arms into China, even when there is an express agreement between the countries concerned to prohibit their nationals from supplying arms to China such as the China Arms Embargo Agreement which was abrogated in 1929.

the above considerations however apply to the sale of arms from private sources. As regards Government owned arms our view has been that though there is no legal state of war between China

and

and Japan situation so far resembles a state of war that transactions which would be incompatible with the duties of a neutral in a legal state of war would be open to criticism. Government owned arms in this country are therefore not being sold to either Chinese or Japanese Governments or to any dealers if it is known that they are required for resale to either Government.

INDEXED

In any further communication on this subject, please quote
No. F 391/37/10
and address—*not to any person by name*, but to—
"The Under-Secretary of State," Foreign Office, London, S.W 1.

P.Z.
T212
1932

(22)

THE Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to The Under Secretary of State for India and, by direction of the Secretary of State, transmits herewith copies of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,
23 Feby, 1932.

pp 865 - Coll 7/9 24/2

P2435/32

Reference to previous correspondence:
Dominions Office letter 6360/15

Description of Enclosure. of 19 January 1932

Name and Date.	Subject.
To:- Dominions Office of 29 January 1932	Export of arms to China

MAILS BRANCH
24 FEB 1932
INDIA OFFICE

ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LET
No. 8 25 FEB. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND
SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

Similar letter sent to W.O. Air Min Admty DoT.

P.Z.
1212
1932

(23)

Copy.

(F 391/37/10)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

29th January, 1932.

Sir,

I am directed by Secretary Sir John Simon to refer to your letter No. 6360/15 of the 19th January regarding a recent enquiry from the Canadian Government in connexion with the export of arms to China.

2. I am to suggest that the Canadian Government should be informed in reply of the practice of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in this matter. Licences are granted for the export of arms to China from the United Kingdom provided that corresponding import licences have been issued by the Chinese Government. This limited restriction is based on a policy of friendliness to the recognised Government of China and of refraining from affording assistance to rebel factions. The present dispute between China and Japan, in the view of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, increases rather than diminishes the difficulty of taking any more drastic steps, since strict impartiality between the two disputants would necessitate the application of any embargo to both countries and, owing to the greater ease with which Japan can manufacture arms, an embargo upon the export of arms to both Japan and China might arouse complaints from the Chinese that in fact it operated in favour of Japan.

3. Apart from these considerations connected with the present

/Manchurian

The Under-Secretary of State,

Dominions Office.

Manchurian dispute, past experience has shown the extreme difficulty of imposing any effective check upon the flow of arms into China, even when, as in the case of the embargo upon the export of arms to China which was abrogated in 1929, there is an express agreement between the countries principally concerned to prohibit the supply of arms to China by their nationals. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom consequently doubt the desirability of attempting any such measures at the present time, whatever might be the advantages to the cause of civil peace in China of a general cessation of the supply of arms to that country.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) C. W. ORDE.

INDEXED

D.O. 3.

Communications on this subject should be addressed to—
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,
DOMINIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1,
and the following number quoted:—
6360/16

P.Z.
865
1932

Subject: Export of Arms to China

I.O. India Mon D (25)

(3)

Pubg

P&P 601

12/11

Reference to previous correspondence:

435/32

Letter ~~to~~ from the Dominions Office of the 19. Jan. 1932 (6360/15)

Telegram to Canada No 15 of 5/2/32

Transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

A copy has also been sent to the Foreign Office, Board of Trade, War Office, Admiralty, Air Ministry & Dept of Overseas Trade

Dominions Office, Downing Street,
- 8 FEB 1932 19

ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LETTER
NO. E 6 11 FEB. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND
SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

(R7077) Wt 7790/2481 20,000(4) 7/30 H & Sp Gp 112

X

P.Z.
865
1932

6360/16.

TELEGRAM from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada.

(Sent 3.30 p.m. 5th February, 1932)

No. 15. Secret.

Your telegram of 16th January No. 11 Secret. Export of arms to China is subject to licence by the Board of Trade which is only granted if corresponding import licence has been issued by the Chinese Government (see my telegram circular B. No. 122 of 8th August 1930). This limited restriction is based on a policy of friendliness to the recognised government of China and of refraining from affording assistance to rebel factions. The present dispute between China and Japan, in the view of H.M.Government in the United Kingdom, increases rather than diminishes the difficulty of taking any more drastic steps, since strict impartiality between the two disputants would necessitate the application of any embargo to both countries. Owing to the greater ease with which Japan can manufacture arms, such application might arouse complaints from China that it in fact operated in favour of Japan.

Apart from these considerations connected with the present dispute, past experience has shown the extreme difficulty of imposing any effective check on the flow of arms into China, even when there is an express agreement between the countries concerned to prohibit their nationals from supplying arms to China, such as the Chinese Arms Embargo Agreement which was abrogated in 1929. H.M.Government in

in the United Kingdom consequently doubt the desirability of attempting any such measures at the present time, whatever might be the advantages to the cause of civil peace in China of a general cessation of the supply of arms to that country.

INDEXED

Any reply to this letter should be addressed to—
THE SECRETARY,
BOARD OF TRADE,
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.
and the following reference number quoted:—
C.R.T. 339/32.

P.Z. 601 1932

BOARD OF TRADE,
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

29th January, 1932.

pp 435/32
Vol. 7139/19.

The Board of Trade present their compliments to The Secretary of State for India in Council, and beg to transmit herewith for information copy of a letter of to-day's date which they have caused to be addressed to The Under Secretary of State, Dominions Office.

E & O. 808
REC'D E & O. REG'Y
4 FEB 1932
INDIA OFFICE

Reference to previous correspondence (if any):—
Dominions Office letter 6360/15 of 19th January, 1932.

I 723 1932
30 JAN 1932
ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LETTER
No. 5
4 FEB. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

B. 2200. Wt. 3495/6845. 3,000. 5/30. Wy. & S., Ltd. Gp. 613

Any *further* communication should be addressed to :—

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY,

at the address given opposite.

The following letter and number should be quoted :—

C.R.T. 339/32.

Telegraphic Address:
COLASTA, PARL, LONDON.

Telephone No.: 3840 Victoria.

COPY.

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND TREATIES DEPARTMENT,
BOARD OF TRADE,
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.

P.Z. 601 1932

29th January, 1932.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 19th January No. 6360/15, regarding the exportation of arms and ammunition to China, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state, for the information of Mr. Secretary Thomas, that they are guided by the views of the Foreign Office on the general question of allowing arms to be exported to any country. Applications for licences to export war material to any destination are as a matter of routine referred for observations to the Foreign Office and the Service Department or Departments concerned, and licences are issued only in cases where no objection is raised.

In the case of China, a further condition precedent to the issue of an export licence is the production of evidence that the Chinese Minister in London is prepared to endorse the shipping documents to the effect that importation of the

The Under Secretary of State,
Dominions Office,
Downing Street,
S.W. 1.

material into China will be allowed by the Chinese Government.

The Secretary of State will probably be aware that from 1919 to 1929 His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom was a party to the China Arms Embargo Agreement which was designed to prevent the importation of arms into China, in view of the unsettled state of the country. Experience of the working of that Agreement showed that the sole effect of the attempt to stop the traffic was to hand over the trade to countries which either were not parties to agreements on the subject or which took no adequate steps to honour the engagements into which they had entered. The steps then taken were entirely ineffective in stopping the flow of arms into China, and since, in the Board's view, no good purpose is served by action which has no other result than to deflect trade from this country, they would naturally look with some distrust upon any renewal of similar restrictions. The Canadian Government may wish to bear the experience of the previous Agreement in mind in considering their attitude towards the traffic in arms to China.

The Board realise that political or military considerations might arise which would require a departure from present practice, but in that case no doubt His Majesty's Government

/in

in Canada would be informed of any change of policy which might be decided upon in this country.

Copies of this letter have been sent to the Foreign Office, India Office, Admiralty, War Office, Air Ministry and Department of Overseas Trade.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) H. FOUNTAIN

(31)

E to I
Dibdin

Porter
25/1

For information.

J. Bonham Carter
21.1.32

Seen. Thanks.

C. H. Silver
22/1/32.

Seen thanks

Wedgwood
25/1/32

P. & O.
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RECD IN INDIA OFFICE
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INDIA OFFICE

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D.O. 3.

INDEXED

Communications on this subject should be addressed to—
THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,
DOMINIONS OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1,
and the following number quoted:—
6360/15

435
1932

(32)

W/O
India.
Mar D

Subject: Export of arms to China

(3)

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter from the Dominions Office of the to

pp file 4139/19.

To B/T F/O 19/1/32

Transmitted by direction of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

ENCLOSURE IN WEEKLY LETTER
NO. 3 21 JAN. 1932
FROM SECRETARY, POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPT. INDIA OFFICE

A copy has also been sent to the W/O Admy A/M DOT

MAILS BRANCH
20 JAN 1932
INDIA OFFICE

Dominions Office, Downing Street,

19

19 JAN 1932

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20 JAN 1932
BRITISH

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1932

6360/15.

CONFIDENTIAL

Downing Street,
19 January, 1932.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Thomas to transmit to you, to be laid before the Board of Trade, Secretary, Sir John Simon, the accompanying copy of a telegram from the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada enquiring as to the practice at present followed in this country in regard to the export of arms and munitions to China, and requesting to be furnished with the views of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom on the general question of the propriety of permitting such exports to any country which is a member of the League of Nations when its relations with another member of the League are strained.

16th January.

2. Mr. Thomas would be glad to receive the Board's observations as to the reply which should be returned to the Canadian Government. Sir John Simon's

3. A similar letter is being sent to the Foreign Office Board of Trade.

4. A copy of this letter with the enclosure is being sent to the War Office, Admiralty, Air Ministry, India Office and Department of Overseas Trade.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) H. N. TAIT.

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND
TREATIES DEPARTMENT,
BOARD OF TRADE.
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FOREIGN OFFICE.

435
1932

Telegram from the Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Dated 16 January,1932. Received at 10.1.p.m. on 16 January, 1932.

No.11 Secret.

The Canadian Government have had under consideration the question of permitting the export to China of munitions, and particularly of rifles. We have serious doubt as to propriety of permitting such exports to any country which is a member of the League of Nations when its relations with another member are strained, and especially when the League of Nations is endeavouring to mediate between the two countries with a view to prevention of possible hostilities. I should appreciate being advised of practice of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and of its views on general question.

Export of Arms to China (20 Jan 1932-25 Nov 1946). 20 Jan 1932-25 Nov 1946. MS Political and Secret Department Records: Series 12: Departmental Papers: Political (External) Files and Collections (1903-1950): Political (External) Collection 7: Arms, Ammunition and Arms Traffic (1912-1949) IOR/L/PS/12/2178. British Library.